

Healthcare Company Accelerates Deployment of New Services

Cisco Services helps Molina Healthcare manage state-of-the-art data center to support growth and changing business needs.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
<p>MOLINA HEALTHCARE, INC.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthcare • Long Beach, California, USA • Approx. 4000 employees, 1.5 million health plan members
<p>CHALLENGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support growth while preparing for new IT services and electronic health records • Implement best practices and methodologies for managing new data center • Help ensure reliable and consistent access to business applications across 65 offices
<p>SOLUTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cisco Services assists in data center planning, design, and implementation • Cisco Nexus switches and Unified Computing Systems lay data center framework • Cisco Wide Area Application Service provides high-performance access to centralized applications
<p>RESULTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accelerated time spent deploying new data center components by 33 percent • Achieved 80 percent reduction in application traffic over network • Significantly reduced monthly data center costs

Challenge

Since 1980, Molina Healthcare, Inc. has been a leader in providing quality and cost-effective Medicaid-related solutions to meet the healthcare needs of low-income families and individuals and to assist state agencies in their administration of the Medicaid program. The company has licensed health plans in California, Florida, Michigan, Missouri, New Mexico, Ohio, Texas, Utah, and Washington, serving approximately 1.5 million members. A subsidiary, Molina Medicaid Solutions, provides business processing and information technology administrative services to Medicaid agencies in Idaho, Louisiana, Maine, New Jersey, and West Virginia, and drug rebate administration services in Florida. To support its continual growth and prepare for delivering new services and electronic health records in the future, Molina decided to consolidate its five data centers into one.

A new data center presented the opportunity for a much-needed upgrade from the company's previous technology. In addition to deploying next-generation systems, the company planned to upgrade its server connection from 1-Gigabit Ethernet (GigE) to 10-GigE to provide bandwidth for a growing number of services and users.

"We wanted to fully utilize this opportunity to build a platform which not only served the current needs of server virtualization but also the future needs of our private cloud. To do this successfully, we realized that we needed to build consistent processes and methodologies," says Rajeev Siddappa, manager of voice and data infrastructure for the company. "We needed a partner who had done this before and could train our teams on how to manage the data center moving forward. Based on a positive experience in the past, we decided to turn to Cisco Services for assistance."

Solution

Cisco Nexus® switches and Cisco Unified Computing Systems™ were chosen to play essential roles in the Molina network. The Nexus-based design supports the 10-GigE connection that Molina required, as well as the company's goal of a 90 percent virtualized data center.

From the planning and design stage, Siddappa and his team noticed a completely different approach than what they had experienced with other vendors. "The Cisco team made sure to understand the business processes first by interacting with the business units, talking with each individual application owner," says Siddappa. "That initial discovery phase made a huge difference for us. Now we could correlate our applications with our traffic flow on a whole new level."

As the implementation phase began, Molina's network infrastructure team continued to be impressed by Cisco Services' attention to detail and careful testing prior to deployment. "They made sure that everything they proposed was tested in their lab beforehand and we were notified about the end results along with any potential issues," says Siddappa. "That made it easy to make the right decisions before we went to production, and I would say, it translated into one of the smoothest implementations I've ever seen. The end result was very satisfactory, with no issues after implementation."

One aspect of the data center consolidation that concerned Siddappa and team was response time for centralized applications. "We have employees working from 65 sites throughout the country, and they all need to access applications as quickly as possible," says Siddappa. "We couldn't risk a delay in our MPLS [Multiprotocol Label Switching] network, so we used the Cisco Wide Area Application Service (WAAS) to ensure consistent availability. The WAAS caching mechanism greatly improved the performance of multiple applications on our network. So much so, that for application users, it's as seamless as if they were getting service delivered locally. Thanks to WAAS, we saw an 80 percent reduction in application traffic over our MPLS network."

Working in conjunction with Cisco Services, Molina's IT department continued to find value in the ongoing communication between the two teams. "It was this constant partnership and knowledge transfer that enabled us to be ready to manage the network on our own," says Siddappa.

"Working with Cisco Services has completely changed the way we approach new business. Not only did we learn how to manage our data center better, we learned how to work together more effectively amongst our internal teams."

— Rajeev Siddappa, manager, voice and data infrastructure, Molina Healthcare

Results

With Cisco® Nexus switches and Cisco Unified Computing Systems as the data center framework, Molina Healthcare now has the architectural flexibility to support business expansion as well as the move toward a 40-GigE backbone in coming years.

Since the implementation, the company has found network management much easier, especially in the face of state regulations that restrict one state or business unit from accessing another's data.

PRODUCT LIST

- Cisco Nexus Switch
- Cisco Unified Computing System
- Cisco MDS Series Multilayer Switch
- Cisco TelePresence™
- Cisco WebEx™
- Cisco Unified Personal Communicator
- Cisco Unity®
- Cisco MeetingPlace®

SERVICES LIST

- Cisco Data Center Planning and Design Service
 - Nexus Planning and Design
 - WAAS Planning and Design
- Cisco Data Center Migration Service
- Cisco SMARTnet® Service

And Cisco Unified Computing Systems reduce device complexity, allowing for more efficient delivery of services. Says Siddappa, "As we continue to grow and expand our presence in different states, we'll need to deploy new applications and network services within the data center. And now that we have a modular infrastructure and approach to expansion, we'll be able to extend our network to new locations while maintaining security and keeping that separation between each business unit."

In addition to management simplicity, this modular framework has enabled faster deployment of new technologies. "Since we don't have to redesign our infrastructure every time we integrate a new technology, we've been able to improve our deployment time by 33 percent," says Siddappa. The

Cisco Unified Computing Systems, in particular, have enabled faster delivery of services to Molina's customers. "Thanks to the reduced cabling and coordination required between our internal teams, our delivery model has been reduced from one week to just one day," says Siddappa. "As a result, Molina not only achieves greater efficiency, but significant cost savings."

The Cisco Services engagement has also taken a huge weight off of the IT department's shoulders. "In the past, whenever someone had a problem accessing an application, they would always blame it on the network," says Siddappa. "But now that we have a consistent methodology and detailed documentation in place, along with a well-trained staff, we prove nearly every time that it's not the network at fault." Siddappa and team also learned a valuable methodology for new processes: keep the application and infrastructure teams in sync with each other.

The Cisco and Molina relationship proved so successful that Cisco CEO John Chambers even made a visit to the healthcare company's headquarters to propose a joint partnership on Cisco's new telemedicine project. "Working with Cisco Services has completely changed the way we approach new business," says Siddappa. "Not only did we learn how to manage our data center better, we learned how to work together more effectively amongst our internal teams. Now that our operations are running with greater efficiency, we have more resources to focus on what truly matters, and that's ensuring the best care for our members."

Next Steps

Molina Healthcare is currently looking at enlisting the help of the Cisco Network Optimization Service to further enhance its MPLS network. “Having a Cisco representative acting as a permanent extension of our team would be wonderful,” says Siddappa. “In all of my experiences working with a Cisco service, the true beauty of these engagements has been the dedicated people and the outstanding coordination they provide.”

For More Information

- To read a previous case study written about Molina Healthcare, visit: http://www.cisco.com/en/US/services/ps2961/case_study_molina_datacenter.pdf.
- To find out more about Cisco Services, visit: www.cisco.com/go/services.
- To find out more about Cisco Data Center Solutions, visit: www.cisco.com/go/datacenter.
- To find out more about Cisco Data Center Services, visit: www.cisco.com/go/dcservices.
- To learn more about Molina Healthcare, visit: www.molinahealthcare.com.



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